

REMARKS

The above amendments to the specification and claims have been made to place the application in proper U.S. format and to conform with proper grammatical and idiomatic English. None of the amendments herein are made for reasons related to patentability. No new matter has been added.

Claims 6 and 1-13 were objected to for being improper. Claim dependencies in claims 6 and 11-13 have been amended to eliminate the improper dependencies and to correct their form. Applicant respectfully requests that this objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5 and 7-10 were objected to for various informalities. The Examiner's helpful suggestions have been used to amend claims 1, 5, 7 and 10 to correct the noted deficiencies. Applicant respectfully requests that this objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5 and 7-10 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Care has been taken to amend the claims to overcome this rejection. Applicant therefore requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5 and 7-10 were rejected under 35 US 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted information contained in the specification in view of Schmidt, German Patent 12 37 612 B. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Schmidt discloses a method of switching off the starting current in electric rail vehicles, so as to save energy by allowing the rail vehicle to coast without current, wherein a switch-off time is determined and a switch-off command is issued to the drive control. The rail vehicle departs from stops on a route in accordance with a predetermined schedule. In practice, however, the actual departure time often differs from that specified in the schedule. As a result of shifts in departure times in relation to the schedule (ahead of schedule or delayed), the starting current switch-off times are also shifted. Because the relationship between the shift in departure times and the shift in

switch-off times is not proportional, the shift in departure times is entered into a program which contains a plurality of signal memories. With the aid of the signal memories, a shift in the switch-off time is assigned to each shift in the departure time.

In this manner, in Schmidt, the task of automatically disconnecting the starting current is solved while taking into account the shift in departure times (automatic switching off).

In contrast, the claimed invention prevents a shift in the switch-off times. Accordingly, switching off is not done automatically, but rather by an operator, such as the driver of the vehicle. In this process, the switch-off time is signaled to the driver. Experience has shown that a certain amount of time passes between signaling and switching off of the starting current, which, in the invention, is taken into account by the fact that signaling occurs at a correspondingly earlier point. Because the principal issue is the reaction time of the driver, the latter is recorded first. This is accomplished by at least taking into account the most recent reaction time. However, it is also possible to form mean values from a series of preceding reaction times. The reaction time, in this case, is the difference between the actual switch-off time and the predetermined switch-off time. In any case, signaling of the switch-off time occurs at a correspondingly earlier point. Thus, it is clearly the purpose of the invention to prevent the actual switch-off time from diverging from the predetermined switch-off time.

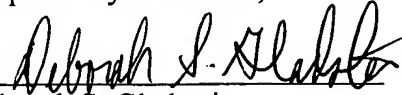
In light of the foregoing, it is clear that neither the admitted disclosure in the specification nor Schmidt, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest the features of claims 1-5 and 7-10. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 449122023000.

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Respectfully submitted,

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